



REPORT/RECOMMENDATION

To: MAYOR AND COUNCIL	Agenda Item <u>Item No. IV.D.</u>
From: Debra Mangen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action
City Clerk	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion
Date: April 17, 2012	<input type="checkbox"/> Information
Subject: Public Meetings and Religious Observance Policy/City Council Meeting Date Change	

ACTION REQUESTED:

Approve the change to the Public Meetings and Religious Observance Policy observing Diwali on its third day each year and change the September 18, 2012 City Council meeting to September 19, 2012.

INFORMATION/BACKGROUND:

At their meeting of March 20, 2012, the City Council adopted a policy for Public Meetings and Religious Observance. After further research, it appears that the third day of Diwali best fits the City’s definition of “day of religious observance with significant work restrictions” For this reason, staff suggests that the policy be clarified to identify the third day of Diwali as the date of religious observance This aligns our observance more closely with holidays such as Passover. The policy has been attached with the change highlighted.

Under the new policy, Rosh Hashanah falls on the 18th of September which is the third Tuesday in September and the night of a regularly scheduled City Council meeting. Staff is suggesting that this Council meeting be moved to Wednesday, September 19, 2012.

ATTACHMENT:

Public Meetings and Religious Observance Policy



CITY OF EDINA PUBLIC MEETINGS AND RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES POLICY

Purpose

It is the policy of the City of Edina to encourage public engagement during decision-making processes. This includes attending or participating in City Council and board/commission meetings. The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for avoiding significant days of religious observance that may preclude participation. At the same time, the City acknowledges that it is not possible to recognize all days of religious observance without significantly impacting the City's ability to conduct business or restricting participation by holding multiple public meetings at the same time.

Restrictions for Public Meetings Due to Religious Observances

In addition to the holidays on which city offices are closed, City Council and board/commission meetings will not be scheduled on the following days of religious observance that include significant work restrictions:

- Good Friday (Christian)
- Christmas Eve (Christian)
- Evening before and day of Yom Kippur (Jewish)
- Evening before and two days of Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)
- Evening before and first two days of Passover (Jewish)
- Eid al Fitr (Muslim)
- Eid al Adha (Muslim)
- The third day of Diwali (Hindu)

Special meetings called for emergency purposes would be exempt from this restriction. City staff and committee /working group chairs are also encouraged to avoid scheduling public meetings or other forums on these dates.

Setting Meeting Schedules

Prior to the start of a new year, the City Clerk will develop a calendar with the restricted dates noted above and identify any conflicts with regularly-scheduled meetings. When a conflict exists, the City Council and boards/commissions will be asked to identify an alternative date prior to the calendar being published at the beginning of the year. When setting the calendar, boards and commissions have the option of rescheduling additional meetings at the request of individual members due to conflicts with days of religious observance not included in the list above.